

Starcrossed Losers by Val-Creative

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Summary: Kids have been talking about a homeless lady wandering the far end of The Canal. A witch. Richie insists they visit her. / Reddie. Richie Tozier/Eddie Kaspbrak. M for language.

Starcrossed Losers

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Kids have been talking about some homeless lady wandering the far end of The Canal. A witch, or so Eddie hears.

She's got twelve toes — she can talk to worms and spiders — she's eight feet tall and walks around naked with her old, saggy tits flopping around — she chased John Richards into the Barrens and that's how he died yesterday, tripping over his own feet and getting full of buckshots by hunters who weren't paying attention, his face and head splitting like a rotten melon —

The vivid and disgusting image sours the remnants of coleslaw turkey sandwich resting inside Eddie's stomach.

Richie grabs onto his arm, yelling excitedly, dragging Eddie from their usual quarter of a mile hike from school to their neighborhood.

"Spaghetti Head, we gotta check this out—"

"No, we don't," Eddie mutters, yanking out of Richie's hand.

As reluctant and irritated as he is, Eddie doesn't turn around. Something deeper inside him than the grain-free turkey tells him that Eddie should. Something sudden and primal and howling. But he's not gonna leave without Richie. They'll probably get shot too if Richie decides to head in the direction of The Barrens.

Out by the thicket, further away from the water, Eddie spots a tall, swaying figure in black. He yelps, knocking into Richie. And, *Richie*, goddamn him, approaches the woman lowering her veil. Pasty, puffy features. Older than Eddie's mother. Greying hair.

Eddie's heart races up his throat.

"This cannot be fucking happening right now," he murmurs in disbelief, wide-eyed as Richie speaks to her, his back to Eddie,

Richie's voice carried underneath the bellowing water. And then, he motions wildly for Eddie to join them. *Don't be a pussy*, his inner Richie 'Trashmouth' Tozier complains. Eddie steels himself, walking forward with his head stiffened and held high.

She's not as tall or ugly or witchy as Eddie assumed. Plenty of wrinkles, but no scars or warts. No tits hanging out.

He's too distracted to notice the sewing needle, up until it pricks into his fingertip. "*WHAT THE FUCK?!*" Eddie yells out, jerking from the Witch's iron-hard grasp, nearly hyperventilating as a droplet of bright red blood wells quickly out of his thumb.

"Eddie, relax!" Richie yells over him, but grin-laughing and cradling his own bleeding thumb. "It's the payment!"

"You didn't say she was gonna *TAKE MY FUCKING BLOOD, RICHIE!*"

His vision spins for a moment, as Eddie wheezes and shuts his eyes, bending over himself. His tongue feels drier than sandpaper. He makes a low noise when Richie's uninjured hand cups the back of Eddie's neck, squeezing down gently.

"Three questions." To everyone's relief, Eddie misses when the Witch hungrily licks blood from the needle. "Three."

Richie glances over to her, brows furrowing. "For him and for me? Each of us?"

"Three."

"This is bullshit," Eddie says, teeth gritting. He glares outright, at Richie, at the Witch, and then at his thumb. It's not his thumb's fault. God, *oh god*, Eddie hopes that sewing needle wasn't covered in bacteria. Eddie doesn't wanna die. Not this young, not in this complete shithole of a town. It feels like Eddie has said this before, but that's the fucking *bizarre* part. He can't remember why or when.

"Am I gonna be rich and famous?" Richie blurts out, pushing up his thick-lens glasses.

"He will," the Witch says in a reedy voice, looking directly at a still-

glaring Eddie. "By those he associates himself with."

"What the hell does that mean?"

"It means as it means."

Richie frowns at her, his upper lip curling. "*Jesus christ*—stop asking her dumb fucking questions already and let's just go," Eddie mumbles, running a sweat-slickened, trembling hand over his chin. But, like always, Richie doesn't wanna listen to good sense.

"Who am I getting married to?"

The Witch examines Richie's sunburned, teenage countenance for a long time. "You will not marry," she declares with the same reedy, apathetic tone, breaking the silence. Eddie goes between watching Richie and her as she clutches onto her dark, lacy shawl, tightening it around herself. And for some reason — some fucking reason he doesn't understand — they still haven't *left*!

"Why not?" Richie insists, his fists bunching up.

"Richie, I *swear*—"

"He does not want you," the Witch interrupts, her clearwater blue eyes squinting in malicious intent. "He does not want you in the way you want him."

Eddie shakes his head, his lips twisting up. "What the hell's she talking about?" he asks Richie.

"I speak of the one left from an unfinished carving. His love and light."

All of the color drains out of Richie's cheeks. He goes from infuriated, into shock, into ebbing into an obvious grimace-smile. "This is stupid," Richie announces, much to Eddie's confusion, keeping his eyes on her. "You're right. Let's get outta here, Eds."

"One," she says, pointing to Eddie. Richie heads back towards Canal Street, climbing up the hill and repeating Eddie's name.

The words leave him without his permission. "I wanna leave Derry. I don't wanna see Mommy anymore and I never wanna come back." Eddie breathes out shakily, transfixed by the slow, winding circle her finger makes. "I wanna know when it happens."

"*Soon.*"

Relief overcomes him, and Eddie snaps out of his haze, blinking.

"But not forever," the Witch informs him. "You were born here, and so you shall die here the same—" *Run*, Trashmouth hisses, and Eddie's brain feels like it's shutting down. His eyes leak hot, gushing tears. "—in the arms of your lover—" Down, down, his stomach and lungs numbing. "—cold and mangled, bleeding out—" Pale, spindly fingers wring to Eddie's neck. "—left to *rot*—"

"*LET GO OF HIM, YOU BITCH!*"

A rock sails in the air, hitting the Witch squarely on the ear. She shrieks high-pitched, unable to dodge the second and much bigger rock hitting her cheek.

Eddie hears Richie's voice and feels warm, clammy hand on his, tugging him back up the hill. Eddie's legs begin working again, pumping, and they're full-speed running towards Bassey Park. Richie glances around frantically, seeing only the emptied playground. "*Fuck!*" he cries out. "Fucking shit! What the *FUCK!?*"

Pain throbs within Eddie's throat, as he gulps and whimpers, breathing erratically.

"Eds," Richie clasps onto his shoulders, getting Eddie's attention. He talks soft and steady to him, holding up his wet, reddened face and never cracking a joke. "*Eds*, look at me. I'm right here. It's over. It's all over, understand?"

It's not.

Eddie knows it, and he will know it deep down as it fades and howls. Even when he moves out of Derry and forgets. They all forget. They've already forgot about Pennywise, and they will forget this and each other with time and distance. It's just how it is.

But maybe they'll have each other.

One day.

Eddie won't leave him behind, no matter what — and he likes to think Richie won't either.

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IT 2017 isn't mine. Thanks very much to the mods of 300bpm Flash Exchange August 2019 for letting me on! I sincerely hope that my giftee likes this! :) I did add in a little bit of Richie's carving on the Kissing Bridge because it's all my brain can think of right now. Especially just Reddie in general. Please enjoy this! And the angst! I would be grateful for any thoughts/comments on this and aaaahhhhhhhhhhhh who is excited for IT: Chapter Two?